Security Quickie 1-28-02, Passwords and Pass Phrases

Like the sands through the hourglass, these are the days of our lives…

And on this particular day, it is time for a password reminder. If you haven't changed your password since the end of November, it is time to do so. ITD policy requires a password change every 60 days for all workstations and systems.

For passwords, use 8 or more alphanumeric characters which include at least one special character, one number, and use both upper and lower case letters.

Protecting your password is just as important as choosing a strong one, so don't use commons names or words, or words that can be associated with you. Don't share your passwords with a co-worker, and don't display your password or use one that is easily guessed. If a password must be shared with someone, change it as soon as possible after they have completed whatever work they need to perform. Also, all default and initial passwords should be changed as soon as possible after receiving them.

Do you have difficulty remembering your passwords? You are not alone. Try using a "**pass phrase**" - a combination of misspelled words or initials, with interspersed numbers and special characters. A pass phrase should be easy to remember but still fulfill the minimum password requirements. For example, the pass phrase "May I have three scoops of ice cream?" becomes the password "MIh3soic?" and includes all the minimum password requirements. It has at least 8 characters (9), at least one special character and number, and has mixed case letters.